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Although closed circuit television is in use in many types of educational situations around the world, relatively little experimentation has been done with video tape recorders now being marketed in a number of countries. The experiment described in this article was undertaken at Tokyo Gakugei Daigaku in 1967 under a grant from the U.S. Educational Commission in Japan. The test group was comprised of 25 first-semester college freshmen who were native speakers of Japanese majoring in English. The experiment was designed to try to answer the following questions--(1) Can language learning material presented with aural and visual stimuli by means of video tape be better learned than material presented with only aural stimuli? (2) Can kinesics be better learned through active role playing? (3) What is the effect of allowing adult language learners to see themselves speaking a foreign language? In answer to the first question, the author reports that the results would indicate a probable positive reply, video tape as a language teaching device could be made superior to audio tape. The second answer is an "unqualified yes," and the third, that it is "beneficial." Further experiments, the authors feel, are "more than justified." (AMM)

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Contents

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Journal of Eng Teaching

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Editors V. C. BICKLEY and K.

EDITORIAL

An obstacle in the path of succes learning is inadequate teacher trai 1958 and describing the work of the U of Education programme for the teac Language, Professor Bruce Pattison w

> 'I decided and my colleagues have with me on this, that what was m the standard of English everyw teachers.'[1]

Eight years earlier, Pattison had poi teachers it was necessary for them to

> 'The language to be taught and t it are both aspects of the same p stantly related to each other. T a language is at once linguistic why teachers of a language need

Reports issued since 1955 at the co and conferences held on the subje languages have confirmed Pattison' training is not sufficient for prospect and that some kind of specific trainin ment that an ideal programme woul dent's own command of English, gi of language and the way it operates

[1] "The University of London Institute English as a Second or Later Language", November, 1958, p. 8.

[2] "English Teaching in the World Tod (London, 1950), p. 6.

Language Teaching with Video Tape

F. M. CAMMACK
and E. A. RICHTER

WHILE the use of closed-circuit television in many types of educational situations is now quite common throughout the world, there has been relatively little experimentation with the potential utility of the smaller, half-inch, video tape recorders now being marketed in a number of countries. The experiment described here was undertaken at Tokyo Gakugei Daigaku during the first half of 1967 under a grant from the U.S. Educational Commission in Japan. The test group was comprised of twenty-five, first-semester college freshmen, all intending to major in English and all trained in the regular Japanese primary and secondary school system. None of the test group had been abroad and all were native speakers of Japanese.

The experiment was designed to try to find answers to the following questions:

(1) Can language-learning material presented with aural *and* visual stimuli by means of video tape be better learned than material presented with only aural stimuli, i.e., by means of audio tape?

(2) Can kinesics be better learned though active role playing, with the ability to review with the student his own performance in comparison with taped models?

(3) What is the effect of allowing adult language learners to see themselves speaking a foreign language; i.e., would the student's resistance to code-switching be reduced or increased if he is placed in a position to "see himself as others see him"?

The incoming class of twenty-five first-semester freshmen were first divided randomly into two groups of twelve and thirteen respectively. Under ordinary circumstances, these students would have been scheduled for two, 100-minute classes in English conversation per week, each class containing the whole group of twenty-five students, and with no necessary coordination of one class with the other. Permission was granted by the English department first to coordinate the two 100-minute periods so that they became, in effect, four 50-minute periods, and then to coordinate the materials presented during these periods so that they became effectively one class rather than two.

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In order to reduce the class size from twenty-five to a more manageable number, and to provide a control, each group was scheduled for two 50-minute sessions of audio or video laboratory work under the direction of a laboratory assistant. The resulting schedule is charted in Figure 1. In contrast to usual practice, new material was presented in the laboratory periods rather than the instructor-led drill periods, in order further to test the effectiveness of mechanically introduced dialogues. The alternating first-week and second-week patterns were designed to eliminate any possible variations that might result from the order of presentation and drill periods.

The materials themselves consisted of a series of seven dialogues and trialogues, each running some fifteen to twenty lines. No attempt was made to grade these materials into any sequence of increasing complexity. All were relatively difficult examples of standard English conversation, with no attempt to simplify either structural or lexical characteristics. Instead, some twenty errors, known to be extremely common among Japanese learners of

Figure I

Sample Schedule

			Group A	Group B
1st Week	Tues	1st Sec.	Video Lab	Drill
		2nd Sec.	Drill	Audio Lab
	Wed	1st Sec.	Video Lab	Drill
		2nd Sec.	Drill	Audio Lab
2nd Week	Tues	1st Sec.	Drill	Audio Lab
		2nd Sec.	Video Lab	Drill
	Wed	1st Sec.	Drill	Audio Lab
		2nd Sec.	Video Lab	Drill
3rd Week	Same as 1st week			
4th Week	Same as 2nd week etc.			

English, were chosen, and structures designed to illustrate their correct use were distributed evenly throughout the dialogue material. Each dialogue therefore contained some two or three known "traps" around which the instructors had agreed to develop expansion and variation drills during their periods of personal contact with with each group. Though two or three of the dialogues

contained the same characters. there was no necessary connection of subject matter among them. Each dealt with a different situation. An attempt was made to include at least one Japanese character in each dialogue with the idea of raising, hopefully, the possibility of student identification with the performers. To this same end, an attempt was made to build the skits around college-age characters. A third reason for including Japanese performers was to demonstrate clearly that learning to speak acceptable English *is* possible for a Japanese student. Moreover, while the authors cannot present any objective proof to support the contention, it is their feeling that for at least some Japanese students, there is a rather subtle, probably subconscious identification of English with the caucasian race, affording one more excuse for maintaining a negative attitude toward learning to speak English well.

With the scripts completed, the experiment next moved into the production stage. With the funds provided by the supporting grant, a Sony Videocorder, two cameras, monitor, and switching equipment were rented. Since one of the secondary objects of the experiment was to establish whether or not amateurs could produce acceptable materials on video-tape, no budget was requested for production. All the skits were taped at the home of one of the authors, with none of the equipment usually available in a television studio. A very minor increase in lighting levels was found to be desirable, but otherwise, the equipment proved perfectly capable of adequate production, and of utilization by novices, with no technical difficulties of any kind. Since editing, by splicing or other means, is somewhat awkward with equipment currently available, it turned out to be easier simply to do "retakes" until a version was deemed acceptable. Amateur performers were easily located, and since the cameras seem to work surprisingly well under ordinary lighting, there were few of the usual difficulties of working long hours under the heat and glare of klieg lights.

With scripts mimeographed for distribution to the students, and a standard audio tape of the sound track dubbed from the original for use with the control group, the materials were all completed and ready for classroom use. During the first week, before any materials were distributed, schedules and operating procedures were explained to the students and each was individually tested, by means of an interview, on the twenty common errors. Performances were then tabulated and recorded on profile cards.

With the beginning of the instructural sequence, it became immediately evident that the shorter period (forty-to-fifty minutes with the usual switch-over time) was enthusiastically received, both by students and instructors. Attention levels, response speed, and general interest were seen to increase in both drill and laboratory periods. Insofar as possible, classroom procedures for both groups

were kept the same. In addition to the u ual types of drill work, two innovations were introduced as the s nester progressed.

In the case of the video group, a camera was set up in the classroom, and as soon as students had become sufficiently familiar with the dialogue material, they were asked to perform the same skits before the camera. While the lighting was far from the best in the available classroom, it was nevertheless possible to obtain fairly good tapes, and it was at this point that the greatest surprise of the experiment occurred. Neither of the authors had any idea of the extent to which the students would react at "seeing themselves on television". Without exception they were utterly charmed at their performances, and more important, the effect of role-playing suddenly eliminated the usual embarrassemnt and hesitation of the classroom atmosphere. Where they were hesitant and shy about responding in class, afraid of making mistakes and of consequent correction, it became a totally different thing before the camera. The authors were quick to take advantage of this turn of events, and the format of drill periods was altered accordingly. Students were asked to act out the skits, making any variations they chose in plot or dialogue. These performances were then replayed, stopped periodically for corrections, and then performed again. While one group was performing, others were rehearsing, thus increasing the amount of participation during the period. The effect of correcting the character on the screen rather than the individual himself was obviously a vast improvement. Toward the end of the semester, drill groups were encouraged to make up their own skits, using the vocabulary and structures of the prepared material, and to perform them before the camera and their "studio audience". The same replay-and-correction process was used, with the same results. The ingenuity and quality of these student-produced skits was gratifyingly high, in a number of cases, probably superior to those prepared by the authors.

Simultaneously with this series of developments in the video group, the same techniques were transferred to the audio group, and not surprisingly, with almost identical results. Here also, hearing oneself proved a positive motivating force, and correcting the "tape" rather than the person proved equally effective. Here again the original skits prepared, recorded, corrected, and rerecorded were uniformly imaginative and entertaining.

During the latter half of the experimental period, it began to be clear that there would probably be little or no significant difference between the video and audio groups, at least not with this particular class. As the authors had suspected might be the case, group rapport quickly developed and each began to develop a degree of competitive reaction toward the other. While this was not strongly evident to the instructors, it may well be a factor in

the following tabulation of the final test. This, like the first test, was an individual interview, and calculated to check on the same twenty common errors.

The results of the final test showed that the total number of mistakes for both groups for the first test was 169, and for the second, 56, or a general improvement factor of approximately 2/3. For the video group, the mistake reduction for test-1/test-2 was 85/26, and for the audio group 84/30. Average number of mistakes per student were, for the video group 7/2.1, and for the audio

Figure II

	Increase in Number of Correct Answers				
	8–9	5–6	3–4	1–2	0
Video	2	4	5	1	—
Audio	0	7	3	2	1

Figure III

No. of Student Errors for Ten Highest Items on Test 1						
	First Test			Second Test		
Item total		audio	video	total	audio	video
attend attend to	10	4	6	1	1	0
give up . . . ing	12	6	6	12	7	5
discuss talk about	14	6	8	5	2	3
find find out	18	9	9	7	4	3
move remove move (res)	15	7	8	6	3	3
If..(neg) doubt if	20	13	7	8	4	4
get tired of.....	23	13	10	0	0	0
on TV (prep. problem	18	9	9	0	0	0

Note: 1 student in video group took only final test, making only 1 error.

group 6.4/2.3. While these figures show a very slight edge in favour of the video system, it can hardly be considered significant given the size of the class and the length (seven instructional weeks) of the experiment, Figure II shows approximately the same results for the relative increase in number of correct items.

Returning then to the first of the three questions around which this experiment was organized, i.e., is video tape significantly better than audio tape as a teaching medium, the results would indicate a probable positive reply, but with strong qualifications about the degree, if any, of its superiority. A third test, not yet complete, may help to clear this answer somewhat, for it is the intention of the authors to test the same students on the same material one more time, after they return from their summer vacation to see if there is any difference in the retention rate between the groups. If the question were rephrased slightly to read, "Could video tape be made a language teaching device superior to audio tape?" it is the author's opinion that the answer would be a very definite "yes". In a country such as Japan, where the government provides a broad variety of language-education programming, the ability to record professionally produced programs for later, and repeated, use (as is now frequently done for radio programs), there can be little question that the video tape recorder has great potential as a language teaching device. The use of the camera in the classroom, as a reinforcing and testing device may decrease somewhat in effectiveness as the novelty wears off, but there is no reason to believe that the charm of watching oneself and the effect of transferred criticism and correction will diminish at all. Although heavier and slightly more complex than audio tape recording equipment, video tape recorders are easy to use, highly flexible, and surprisingly durable. A slight problem of compatibility is yet to be solved by the manufacturers, for camera-recorded tapes made on one machine will not always synchronize perfectly when played on another machine. During the present experiment, however, this did not prove to be a particularly limiting problem, and it is highly probable that the technical factors causing this limitation will be solved within the near future.

To the second question, concerning the teaching of kinesics by means of video tape, the answer is an unqualified "yes". Conversational stance, gestures, facial expressions are all easily brought to the attention of students when it is possible to present a model, then play and replay it, with instructor's comments. Some of the most interesting, and occasionally entertaining, class sessions during this experiment involved attempts to demonstrate the usefulness in English of the shrug, the questioning expressions, the expressions of disgust or distaste, which are so much a part of English and so very different from their Japanese counterparts.

The answer to the third question, about the effect of allowing language students to see themselves speaking a foreign language, the answer again is definitely "yes, it is beneficial". Although already discussed above, it should perhaps be noted again that the one really valuable lesson learned from this experiment was the technique of reducing, and in many instances eliminating, the old problems of students' hesitancy to try to switch codes in the presence of others. When the blame for errors can be apparently transferred to the screen, while the student is being corrected, the difference in classroom atmosphere is truly impressive.

In sum, then, it is the authors' opinion that further experiments with the educational uses of video tape are more than justified in the language classroom, and that the combined inventiveness of both students and teachers can contribute a great deal to the effectiveness and interest of almost any level of language teaching.